

Ex post evaluation

Local elections in Burkina Faso



Title	Support for local elections (2016) in Burkina Faso		
Sector and CRS code	Democracy, civil society and public administration (CRS code: OECD field of assistance 1515100 Elections)		
Project number	BMZ no.: 2015 68 062		
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)		
Recipient/project executing agency	CENI (Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante) and the non-governmental organisation (NGO) ECES (European Centre for Electoral Support)		
Project volume/ Financial Instrument (FC)	Financial contribution of EUR 1.5 million		
Project duration	03/2016 – 12/2016		
Year of report	2021	Year of random sample	2019

Objectives and project outline

The outcome-level objective was the use of the materials provided for the local elections, which – at the time of the project appraisal – consisted of ink and polling booths needed for the election process. The impact-level objective was to contribute to the proper running of credible, peaceful and transparent 2016 local elections through the financing of priority election materials.

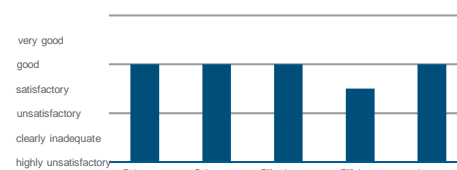
To achieve the outcome, election materials were procured using a tendering procedure and made available to the voting districts. The project financed the printing of polling cards and various materials, including containers.

Key findings

The project is rated as “successful” because it contributed to the running of credible, peaceful and transparent local elections in 2016 and generally provided important support to the Burkina Faso transition process.

- With regard to the insufficient financing options in Burkina Faso for holding the local elections, which were called at short notice, (= core issue), the project was important and exhibited a high level of relevance given the country’s political upheaval.
- It complemented the accompanying PACTE-BF project financed by the European Union (EU), Luxembourg, Austria, Germany (German Federal Foreign Office), France, Canada and Denmark, a project that addressed the parliamentary and presidential elections in Burkina Faso at the end of 2015.
- From the planned EUR 1.5 million, just 41 %, EUR 620,377.87, was used. The cost of implementation was high in relation to the benefit. Despite the changes to the material provided, the process of procuring and distributing election materials was handled in a quick and flexible manner.
- Due to the political conflicts and the failure to establish local councils, new local elections were held in 19 out of the 368 local authorities in May 2017.

Overall rating*:
Successful



Conclusions

- The simple rationale and the flexible design were important in the context of the unstable political situation. As such, they also corresponded to the small volume of financing and the limited time in which the measure could potentially have an impact (one-off provision of material).
- Cooperation with the NGO ECES, which specialises in voting processes, enabled the procurement process to take place quickly and facilitated a swift alternative solution following the discovery of unplanned, leftover election material.
- In certain circumstances, channeling funds in the form of increasing funds to complementary donor projects can reduce the implementation costs of low-volume contributions and increase structural effects.

Rating according to DAC criteria

Overall rating: 2

Ratings:

Relevance	2
Effectiveness	2
Coherence	2
Efficiency	3
Impact	2
Sustainability	-

General conditions and classification of the project

At the time of the project's planning and implementation phase (2015–2016), Burkina Faso was in the midst of a transition, triggered by the resignation of President Blaise Compaoré, who had been in power for 27 years, and the dissolution of the parliament and local councils in late October 2014. Compaoré's resignation was preceded by large-scale protests and the population's growing wish for a democratic system of government. Due to an attempted coup in September 2015, the (joint) presidential and parliamentary elections and local elections were not held in October 2015 and January 2016 as planned, but in November 2015 (29 November 2015) and May 2016 (22 May 2016). Roch Marc Kaboré, the candidate from the newly founded People's Movement for Progress (Mouvement du peuple pour le progrès, MPP) who had previously defected from Compaoré's government, was elected as the new president as a result of the elections in late 2015.

The FC measure served to support the local elections and was implemented as an urgent measure aimed at procuring election materials in a short space of time. The FC measure's executing agencies were the CENI (Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante), the electoral commission responsible for organising the vote, and the non-governmental organisation (NGO) commissioned by CENI, ECES (European Centre for Electoral Support), who primarily supported the procurement process.

The project was a stand-alone measure to the extent that it was not assigned to an existing FC programme. However, it was linked to the decentralisation focus area of German-Burkinabe cooperation. Promoting the capacity of local authorities is one of the objectives in this focus area.

Breakdown of total costs

		Planned	Actual
Investment costs	EUR million	23,000,000.00	10,232,000.00
Counterpart contribution	EUR million	Not known	Not known
Funding	EUR million	1,500,000.00	620,377.87
of which BMZ budget funds	EUR million	1,500,000.00	620,377.87

Relevance

With regard to the core issue of insufficient financing options in Burkina Faso for holding local elections, the project was important and exhibited a high level of relevance given the country's political upheaval. In view of Compaoré's unexpected resignation, the lack of regular funds in the state budget to finance the elections, which were called at short notice and took place prior to the normal cycle of elections, is plausible as the underlying core issue. The concept selected for financing the local elections can be attributed to factors including the initiative pursued by the German embassy, which was keen to support the

transitional Burkinabe government. Even though the project was a stand-alone measure in terms of its content, the completion of successful local elections was deemed significant for the decentralisation focus area (FC municipal development fund). The FC measure also complemented the partner country's policy. The national Burkinabe development plan for the period from 2016–2020 (Plan National de Développement Économique et Social – PNDES) included the strategic objectives of reinforcing decentralisation measures and promoting good local governance.

At the time of the project appraisal, several points indicated that the availability of election materials at local level had been identified as a bottleneck prior to the elections. This is suggested by the high estimated total costs of the local elections (forecast: EUR 23 million, actual: EUR 10.2 million) by the national electoral commission CENI. This is also highlighted in a letter from the NGO ECES addressed to KfW, containing a request to provide additional funds needed to organise materials for the local elections. Furthermore, the provision of election materials had been identified as a critical factor for a successful election process and improved credibility and acceptance of the election results. As such, by providing the lacking materials needed to hold the local elections, the FC project addressed an important aspect of the underlying financing issue. Given the urgency of the political situation and the speed with which materials were required, the project's design as an urgent measure made sense, enabling the FC funds to be used in Burkina Faso in a timely manner prior to the date of the local elections.

The FC project's rationale was based on the objectives of the accompanying project PACTE-BF (Projet d'Appui à la Crédibilité et à la Transparence des Elections au Burkina Faso). Similar to the general objective of PACTE, the impact-level development objective was to contribute to the proper running of credible, peaceful and transparent elections. On the FC side, this contribution was made by the financing of election materials at local level. The outcome-level objective was the use of the materials provided, which consisted of ink and polling booths at the time of the project appraisal. In the context of the country's political upheaval and given the uncertainty surrounding the feasibility of the elections prior to them taking place, the formulated objectives appear extremely realistic from today's perspective and generally correspond to the low financing framework planned (EUR 1.5 million) and the limited time in which there was potential for impact (one-off provision of materials).

The polarisation within domestic politics, the inequality in the distribution of wealth and opportunities in Burkinabe society, and the Sahel regional conflict were correctly identified as potential risks during the assessment at the time of the project appraisal. Additionally, the capacity shortages at the executing agency, the national electoral commission CENI, was identified as a risk and the NGO ECES was brought in to prevent this, being incorporated into the project design as an extra executing agency for the measure. At the same time, the appraisal noted the potential that a legitimate and effective government formed as a result of the elections could (more) adequately address the social conflicts. In view of this situation, the successful completion of local elections was generally also regarded as an opportunity for Burkina Faso to return to constitutional normality, for the country's political stability to improve and for the democratic process to be positively affected over the long term. These assumptions highlight the relevance of the project in the country-specific context and in the framework of German and international support for the Burkinabe election process.

Relevance rating: 2

Coherence

The FC measure contributed to the Burkinabe population being able to freely and independently determine their local governments in the territorial authorities. By strengthening participative development in this way, the project can be classified under DC's decentralisation focus area, albeit as a stand-alone measure. Decentralisation is one of the three themed focus areas in bilateral German-Burkinabe cooperation, aimed at reinforcing participation in decision-making processes and promoting the capacities of the individual local authorities. By means of the municipal development fund, the decentralisation projects in this focus area support in various phases the development and maintenance of municipal infrastructure and the population's participation in local decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the FC project complemented the content of the accompanying PACTE-BF project financed by the European Union (EU), Luxembourg, Austria, Germany, France, Canada and Denmark; this project mainly addressed the parliamentary and presidential elections in Burkina Faso. The only support provided

for the local elections was through the reinforcement of capacity at the Burkinabe electoral commission CENI in the areas of (i) transitioning between the national and local elections, (ii) evaluating the national election process, and (iii) drawing up an inventory of reusable election materials from the presidential and parliamentary elections. This also stems from the specific project objectives of PACTE-BF, which focused on technical and operational support and the long-term development of capacity at the national electoral commission CENI. The extent to which direct financing of election materials at local level had been intended under PACTE-BF can no longer be identified from today's perspective. However, it can be assumed that the recording of inventory from the earlier elections revealed that enough ink and polling booths were still available, which in turn positively underlines the coherence of the project (see Effectiveness with regard to change in procurement). With regard to the reason for implementing the FC contribution as a stand-alone, parallel measure with ECES, it can (merely) be speculated at the time of the EPE that the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) increasing the capital of or directly financing PACTE-BF with a view to distinguishing it from a German Federal Foreign Office project in the form of basket funding (which would have had to be presented to the Budget Commission) would have proved to be difficult and likely too long-winded. In terms of the administration of both projects, no precise statement can be made as to the areas in which the projects were managed collectively and the extent to which they were dealt with separately.

Coherence rating: 2

Effectiveness

The outcome-level objective was the use of the materials provided by FC for the local elections. The achievement of the indicators set out for the EPE can be summarised as follows:

Indicator	Status PA, target PA	Ex post evaluation
(1) The local elections are held in 2016.	Status PA: – Target value: Yes	Achieved: The local elections took place on 22 May 2016.
(2) Nothing or nothing significant regarding a lack of materials is reported by the press or election observers.	Status PA: – Target value: Nothing or nothing significant	Achieved
(3) Added: The provided materials are used in all 368 local authorities.	Status PA: – Target value: 368	Mainly achieved, achieved in 365 out of 368 local authorities

The achievement of the objective at outcome level was verified by three indicators. Despite being delayed, the local elections were still held and nothing significant regarding a lack of materials was reported by the press or election observers. Originally scheduled for the end of January 2016, the local elections were eventually postponed until the end of May 2016 due to the coup in September 2015 and as a result of terrorist attacks in Ouagadougou in mid-January 2016. Positive emphasis must be placed on the fact that the elections could still be prepared for and held given the resulting heightened political situation and the institutional weaknesses in the electoral commission and its regional branches.

Furthermore, a portion of the material costs for the local elections could be financed using the materials provided by FC. However, during the implementation phase, deviations from the originally agreed purchases were identified. Instead of the planned polling booths and voting ink, financing was provided for the printing of polling cards and voter lists, toner for photocopiers and containers for the storage of election documents. The purchases were amended because the presidential and parliamentary elections at the end of November 2015 only required one ballot, which meant that it was possible to save on election materials. This was impossible to anticipate at the time of the project appraisal as the original plan was to have two ballots.

To evaluate the broad-scale use of materials more accurately, one indicator was added during the EPE to measure whether the elections took place everywhere, i.e. in all of the country's 368 local authorities, and

whether the financed funds were used accordingly there. When it comes to the achievement of this indicator, the results show that elections were held in 365 of 368 local authorities and the materials were used accordingly. In the three local authorities of Zogoré, Bouroum-Bouroum and Béguédo, the elections had to be cancelled due to political tensions.¹ According to the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), dissatisfaction with voter lists was the trigger for the unrest in Zogoré and Bouroum-Bouroum. In Béguédo, the reorganisation of the voter directory and the resulting creation of four new villages led to conflicts as this meant that some residents were unable to register on time. The local elections were held in these local authorities on 28 May 2017.

Effectiveness rating: 2

Efficiency

The following factors impair efficiency: the available financing framework in the amount of EUR 1.5 million was not fully exploited. The total FC measure financing for the local elections amounted to EUR 620,377.87, which only corresponds to 41 % of the funds originally planned. The main reason for the reduced costs was that reusable materials were still available from the previous elections due to the omission of the second ballot, which significantly reduced the financing requirements for the local elections. Under the efficiency criteria, the outlay for implementation (including the contractual obligations and project management) is not commensurate with the low benefits in comparison to the low project funds. At EUR 10.2 million, the total costs for the local elections were also significantly below the originally estimated sum of EUR 23 million. During the EPE, it was not possible to obtain any information regarding the Burkinabe contribution or the origin of the remaining funds.² The proper use of the funds from the FC contribution was confirmed by a Burkinabe auditing firm. The extension of the project's term by 4 months due to the delayed elections appears non-critical from today's perspective and in view of the political developments and tends to underline the described flexibility and adaptability in the project's design.

The administrative expenses for the NGO ECES calculated during the project appraisal amounted to EUR 100,000.00, a share of close to 7 %.³ The amount actually paid out (EUR 89,961.87) is higher in proportion to the actual investment (EUR 530,416.00) (17 %). However, the output (procurement of materials) was still achieved despite the change to the purchases and this meant that the NGO incurred additional costs because tenders had to be prepared for both the originally planned lots (polling booths and ink) and for the two new lots (printing of polling cards and various materials, including containers). In spite of the additional costs caused by the new tendering processes, the administrative expenses remained below the amount originally planned. Even within the framework of the PACTE project, the cost-efficient procurement process was highlighted as positive by ECES. This can be attributed to factors including the NGO's staff, who were specialists in the procurement of election materials. In view of this, the consideration of the NGO ECES as an additional executing agency in the project design alongside CENI was beneficial and helped to increase efficiency.

In terms of the efficiency of the procurement and distribution of election materials, the process was generally dealt with in a positive, swift and flexible manner. For instance, there was just one month between the realisation that there was still a sufficient supply of ink and the time at which a new adjusted, needs-based offer was submitted. The office responsible for distributing the materials, CENI, forwarded the supplied materials to its branch offices and the respective polling stations. The documents described that, to ensure that the materials were supplied on time, CENI started distributing materials to the local authorities as soon as the slightly delayed deliveries arrived (toner and containers). This needs-based adaptability of the stakeholders involved in the voting process must be emphasised as positive. In view of the

¹ During previous elections, there were occasionally cancellations in individual election offices due to irregularities in voting lists, voting cards or the last-minute relocation of election offices. According to WANEP, local elections in Burkina Faso can be very susceptible to conflict (« Les élections municipales sont les plus conflictuelles au Burkina Faso »). For this reason, the conflicts in the local authorities of Zogoré, Bouroum-Bouroum and Béguédo (out of the 368 areas in total) are regarded as low-priority/less severe for the assessment of the project's success.

² The PACTE-BF financed roughly EUR 7.3 million for both the presidential and parliamentary elections and the local elections.

³ In relation to the original FC contribution of EUR 1.4 million.

implementation expenses, which were high in comparison to the benefits, the project is rated as “partially successful” on the whole in respect of efficiency criteria.

Efficiency rating: 3

Impact

The impact-level objective was to contribute to the proper running of credible, peaceful and transparent 2016 local elections through the financing of priority election materials. The achievement of the indicators set out for the EPE can be summarised as follows:

Indicator	Status PA, target PA	Ex post evaluation
(1) Election observations verify transparent and valid elections in general.	Status PA: – Target value: Yes	Achieved
(2) Media reports refer to peaceful local elections.	Status PA: – Target value: Yes	Achieved
(3) Added: Local councils can be established in all 368 local authorities after the elections.	Status PA: – Target value: 368 local councils	Mainly achieved, achieved in 349 out of 368 local authorities;

According to national and international reports, the local elections were largely peaceful without any major irregularities. In addition to WANEP, this conclusion was also drawn in the external evaluation of PACTE-BF, the Africa Research Bulletin and relevant media outlets. The society of observers of civil organisations CODEL (Convention des Organisations de la Société Civile pour l’Observation Domestique des Elections) and its 1,056 election observers congratulated the electoral commission CENI on the transparent, inclusive and efficient elections in general. As during the national elections at the end of 2015, the MPP received the majority of votes.

In addition to the political conflicts in the local authorities of Zogoré, Bouroum-Bouroum and Béguédo, there were also violent protests and unrest after the mayoral elections in some local authorities, including some deaths in individual cases. According to the NGO IFES (International Foundation for Electoral Systems), this meant that no local councils could be formed in 16 local authorities. Together with the local authorities where the elections were cancelled in advance, there were 19 local authorities where the election process could not be formally concluded.⁴

To depict the development of the indicators presented here, an additional impact indicator was added during the EPE, which can be used to assess the comprehensive implementation of the local elections and the successful conclusion of the election process ending with the creation of local councils. In view of the conflicts during the mayoral elections, this additional indicator can be recognised as “largely achieved”. This also enabled the phrase “peaceful process” used in the second impact indicator to be refined, after the initial indicator left room for interpretation. Since the incidents described took place in around 5 % of the local authorities, the project’s targets at impact level can be summarised as “achieved”.

Election participation rates can be taken into account with regard to the implementation of transparent elections. Several media outlets referred to a relatively low voter turnout of 47.65 % compared to the 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections (59.88 %) and local elections in previous years (75.3 % at the

⁴ On 28 May 2017, repeat local elections were organised in Andemtenga, Barani, Béguédo, Bouroum-Bouroum, Dablo, Dandé, Karangasso Vigué, Kantchari, Kindi, Kombori, Koungny, Madjoari, Saponé, Séytenga, Zabré, Ziga, Zoaga, Zogoré, and in the fourth district of Ouagadougou.

2012 local elections⁵). It can be assumed that there was less of a rush to attend the 2016 local elections due to the earlier parliamentary and presidential elections.

In general, it can be noted in retrospect that the improvements to the Burkinabe election process, such as a quicker system for the transmission of election results, can be attributed more to the capacity-building measures for CENI under PACTE-BF. As such, the FC-financed, one-off provision of material (only) had a structural effect on top of PACTE. The project can primarily be evaluated as an important, political signal for the support of the democratic process. Given the upheaval in the country, the measure made an important contribution to the Burkinabe transition process. Beyond the impact-level objective, it can be noted that, with the local elections held after the parliamentary and presidential elections, the process for restoring constitutional order within 18 months of the civil uprising was generally successful.

Overarching developmental impact rating: 2

Sustainability

Since the project was designed as an urgent project due to the urgency of the context and only involved the one-time provision of election materials (no operating phase), there are no sustainability-related requirements. The criterion was therefore not included as part of the project evaluation. To conclude, however, several observations can be made concerning the process of democratisation in Burkina Faso. The GIGA (German Institute of Global and Area Studies) has generally observed open and free political competition in the country since the creation of the coalition government under the MPP's President Kaboré at the end of 2015; this environment is shaped by an active parliamentary opposition, independent media and a strong civil society. Developments, such as the legal handling of the coup, the new human rights commission initiated by the government in 2016, and the approval of the new decentralisation benchmark in 2018 have also been regarded as democratic successes. "Political freedom has also improved in the eyes of the population." However, these positive developments for democratisation, which go beyond the project itself, have been dampened in recent years due to the growing Sahel regional conflict. The security situation has seriously deteriorated in connection with the frequent terror attacks. The safety problems also impacted on the most recent parliamentary and presidential elections in November 2020. For instance, almost 2,000 polling stations were forced to remain closed due to poor safety, and many people entitled to vote did not register.⁶ On the whole, however, election observers rated the 2020 elections as satisfactory and well organised, which allows conclusions to be drawn on the strong position of CENI.

With regard to the challenges during the 2016 mayoral elections, WANEP made a recommendation in its election observation report («Monitoring du processus électoral pour des élections apaisées au Burkina Faso en 2015 et 2016») that the Elections Act be amended to include a clause on the unambiguous appointment of a mayor, so that the candidate from a party with an absolute majority in a local authority can also be appointed mayor of this authority. During the discussions held for the EPE, it became clear that the vague system for appointing a mayor has yet to be replaced. In contrast, it is worth emphasising the positive fact that, in the most recent elections at the end of November 2020, the population was able to take part in the election from abroad for the first time. This can be regarded as an improvement to the voting process and underlying conditions, even though the deadline for registration was very short and disputed.⁷

Sustainability rating: -

⁵ According to L'Actualité du Burkina Faso.

⁶ From the 20 million Burkinabés in total, around 6.5 million people registered to vote. The gap between this figure and the actual 10 million people eligible to vote is said to be down to a lack of identification documents, the difficult safety situation or the lack of interest in politics.

⁷ According to reports, the large diaspora living in Côte d'Ivoire had just 21 days to register to vote.

Notes on the methods used to evaluate project success (project rating)

Projects (and programmes) are evaluated on a six-point scale, the criteria being **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency** and **overarching developmental impact**. The ratings are also used to arrive at a **final assessment** of a project's overall developmental efficacy. The scale is as follows:

Level 1	Very good result that clearly exceeds expectations
Level 2	Good result, fully in line with expectations and without any significant shortcomings
Level 3	Satisfactory result – project falls short of expectations but the positive results dominate
Level 4	Unsatisfactory result – significantly below expectations, with negative results dominating despite discernible positive results
Level 5	Clearly inadequate result – despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
Level 6	The project has no impact or the situation has actually deteriorated

Rating levels 1-3 denote a positive assessment or successful project while rating levels 4-6 denote a negative assessment.

Sustainability is evaluated according to the following four-point scale:

Sustainability level 1 (very good sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to continue undiminished or even increase.

Sustainability level 2 (good sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline only minimally but remain positive overall. (This is what can normally be expected).

Sustainability level 3 (satisfactory sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline significantly but remain positive overall. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability of a project is considered inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation but is very likely to evolve positively so that the project will ultimately achieve positive developmental efficacy.

Sustainability level 4 (inadequate sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project is inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation and is very unlikely to improve. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability that has been positively evaluated to date is very likely to deteriorate severely and no longer meet the level 3 criteria.

The **overall rating** on the six-point scale is compiled from a weighting of all five individual criteria as appropriate to the project in question. Rating levels 1-3 of the overall rating denote a "successful" project while rating levels 4-6 denote an "unsuccessful" project. It should be noted that a project can generally be considered developmentally "successful" only if the achievement of the project objective ("effectiveness"), the impact on the overall objective ("overarching developmental impact") and the sustainability are rated at least "satisfactory" (level 3).